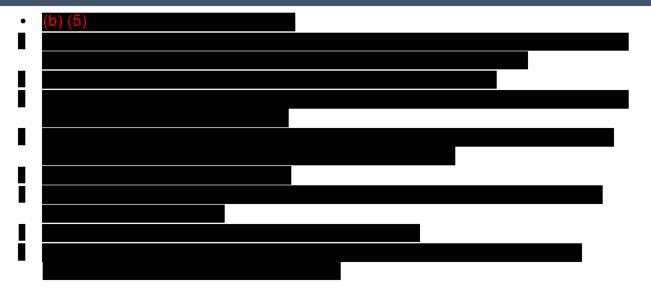
## FOUNDATIONS FOR EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING ACT OF 2018

### **ISSUE SUMMARY:**

The Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act (Evidence Act) provides a new federal framework to promote a culture of evaluation, continuous learning, and decision making using the best available evidence. Early decisions from the Administrator and policy team on agency priorities and preferred approach to fulfilling the Evidence Act requirements are critical given tight deadlines for issuing required deliverables and EPA's status as an agency that is just beginning to implement expected evidence-building functions.

### **UPCOMING MILESTONES:**



### **BACKGROUND:**

- The Evidence Act was bipartisan legislation championed by Senator Patty Murray and former House Speaker Paul Ryan and signed by President Trump on January 14, 2019. The law implements half of the recommendations from the bipartisan U.S. Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking report <u>The Promise</u> of <u>Evidence Based Policy Making</u>. Provisions of the law include the following agency requirements:
  - Title I, Federal Evidence-Building Activities: (1) develop and issue a Learning Agenda (i.e. evidence-building plan) and Capacity Assessment as part of the 4-Year Strategic Plan; (2) publish an Annual Agency Evaluation Plan; (3) designate an Evaluation Officer and Statistical Official.
  - o Title II, Government Data Act: (1) issue a Strategic Information Resources Management Plan and conduct a Comprehensive Data Inventory and (2) designate a Chief Data Officer.
  - Title III, Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act: (1) meet confidential
    information protection requirements and (2) make data assets available, as practicable, to any
    statistical agency and external researchers.
- The Agency submitted an Interim Learning Agenda to OMB as required in September 2020. It focuses on the following three Learning Priorities: workforce planning; drinking water systems out of compliance; and grant commitments met.

- The Agency submitted an Interim Capacity Assessment to OMB as required in September 2020. It provides EPA-specific context and the planned approach for the final assessment.
- EPA's Evidence Act Workgroup is a standing advisory body co-chaired by the three designated Evidence Act
  officials to provide leadership and coordination and to promote consistency and quality in agency
  implementation activities and deliverables. All Headquarters offices and key Lead Regions are represented.
- The Evidence Act specifically advances program evaluation as an essential component of Federal evidence building. Agencies are expected to follow OMB guidance outlining program evaluation standards in developing and implementing evaluation activities, evaluation policies, and in hiring and retaining qualified staff.

### **KEY EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:**

Please check which stakeholder(s) are likely to reach out to the incoming political team about this issue					
$\square$ Congress	$\square$ Industry	⊠States	□ Tribes	☐ Media	☑ Other Federal Agency
⊠ NGO	☐ Other (name of stakeholder)				
Please describe key concern(s):					
<ul> <li>Several OMB offices are highly involved in the implementation of the Evidence Act; they have been actively engaging EPA on questions about the implementation of, and deliverables for, the Evidence Act.</li> <li>Several national think tanks, academic institutions, and associations follow federal Evidence Act implementation closely, including Results for America, The Data Coalition and the Partnership for Public Service, among others.</li> </ul>					
<ul> <li>To develop the Interim Learning Agenda, EPA officials engaged with relevant external experts and stakeholders, especially with states and tribes, to formulate priority questions and to plan and implement the activities designed to answer them.</li> </ul>					

## **MOVING FORWARD:**

- Led by OCFO, the Evidence Act designated officials, along with the Learning Priority leads, can provide a briefing on the Interim Learning Agenda and other deliverables/activities.
- Since most major Evidence Act deliverables in FY 2021 fall under the approach to the Strategic Plan, OCFO and
  the three designated officials will work with the Administrator's policy team to obtain decisions on the
  approach and roles for delivering the Final Learning Agenda, Capacity Assessment and Evaluation Plan. OCFO
  and the designated officials will then engage with the agency and stakeholders to implement the approach.

# LEAD OFFICE/REGION: OCFO – Evaluation Officer (Acting) OMS –Chief Data Officer; OA/OP –Statistical Official OMS –Workforce Planning learning priority OECA/OW –Drinking water systems out of compliance learning priority OA-OCIR/Region 9 – Grant commitments met learning priority